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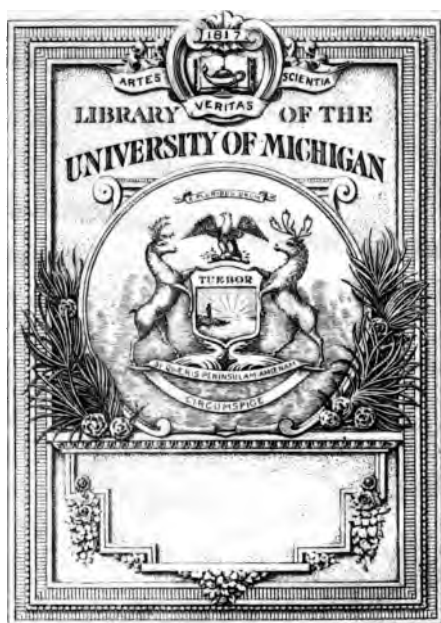
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R. Rush

EDUCATION (IRELAND).

S P E E C H

OF

SIR THOMAS WYSE, Esq., M.P.,

IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1835,

On moving for leave to bring in a Bill for the establishment of a Board
of National Education, and the advancement of Elementary Education
in Ireland.

Extracted from the "Mirror of Parliament."

L O N D O N :

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1835.

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not given.

See Edinburgh Review No 131. Art
X1. Page 245. for the general
Subject of National Education
in connexion with a notice of
this speech.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1835.

Mr. WYSE.—I rise to move, pursuant to a notice given at the beginning of this Session, for leave to bring in a Bill for the establishing a Board of National Education, and the advancement of Elementary Education in Ireland; the first of a series of measures which I trust I may be permitted, as circumstances shall allow, to submit to this House for the amelioration, more general diffusion, and permanent support of education in that country. I placed my notice thus early on your Order-Book, not with any factious or partisan design to embarrass this Ministry or to assist that,—so high and national a subject would, in my mind, have been profaned by a limited and temporary application,—but from a deep and sacred conviction, now of many years standing, that of all great objects of national policy, which can engage the attention of subject or ruler, this is by far the greatest;—great now, great at all times; not a helper, only, in the building up of society and civilization, but the only foundation on which all society and civilization must finally rest. He who neglects this, may construct what social edifice he pleases; he will soon find, to his cost, that he has been but “an architect of ruins.” He may range institution on institution, without that,—which alone can give the structure cohesion and solidity,—the pack of cards, at the first breath of civil commotion, will come tumbling down. Constitutions are good and necessary, but a good Constitution may be long in giving a good education: it is scarcely in the nature of moral things that a good National Education should not, ere long, render necessary and certain a good Constitution. These were my opinions in 1831,—enlarged, and confirmed, and matured, they are more than ever my opinions in 1835. With little or no encouragement,—with apathy or hostility (and there are cases and times in which apathy is worse than hostility) to check even a mention of the subject,—with scarcely ten auxiliaries in this House, which now boasts its almost unanimous anxiety for

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some such measure,—I ventured, in the former year, with no hope of immediate success, but with a certain confidence of future, to solicit even a momentary attention to the first Bill ever introduced into Parliament for Irish Education. That Bill I should have pressed to a positive decision of the House, notwithstanding all the difficulties with which I felt it was surrounded, had I not apprehended embarrassing, by such discussions, the progress of the Reform Bill then pending and against which was arrayed every sectarian as well as political prejudice, in either country. I received, too, the assurance, that many of its provisions would be reduced to early trial, by the then Government, in the form of an experiment; and I had hopes that new aid would be thus afforded in every future discussion, from the strong evidence of experience. The Bill was proceeding to a second reading in September—when Parliament was prorogued; and in the following October, the then Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Stanley), with a courage and wisdom which bear, indeed, a favorable contrast to the pusillanimous and purblind policy of former governments, constituted in his “Instructions” to the Duke of Leinster, the present Board of Irish Education, on almost the precise model in the Bill. More than two years have now elapsed since that important experiment was first risked. In despite of every evil prophecy, calculated and intended to realize what it foreboded—in despite of every impediment which disappointed favoritism, political and religious bigotry, and, I am willing to believe, honest, though mistaken apprehensions have thrown in its way,—the experiment (as I shall be enabled amply to prove in Committee) has, as far as it was intended to go, most thoroughly succeeded. I may be asked, then, why disturb its progress, or endanger the already effected good, by attempting something better? Simply, because this progress is at this very moment exposed, from the want of some legislative sanction, to continual disturbance; and, secondly, because the good on which we have to congratulate ourselves is far, indeed, below the standard, which I am as certain as I am that I am standing here, we are fully able to attain.

The present system is confined and comparatively feeble in its operation; the distribution of its powers and duties (I pointed out the defect in the beginning, and the results have since justified my apprehensions), is injudicious; and above all, were it to combine every excellence that human system could boast of, the nation has no guarantee for its duration: its annihilation, like its creation, may be the work of a day. It was right, perhaps, at the outset, considering not merely the hostility of one party, but the com-

parative ignorance of all, to invest it with this provisional character. There are prejudices which must be wooed to be won, and where moral changes are in contemplation, no prejudice is to be altogether disregarded; light, too, was to be poured in, by degrees, on the darkness of the public; the very feeling that it was an experiment disarmed, and invited attention and patience for the result. But that time is passed, and to delay now is not wisdom, but indolence or cowardice. The very dread that it will be allowed to continue in this wavering ambiguous state, dulls co-operation on the part of the public. Few men will zealously interest themselves in consolidating a fabric which may be destroyed they know not when. That these are not visionary fears the conduct of the late Ministry gives ample proof. The Right Honourable Baronet himself,—though far superior in extended and rational views to those around him,—dwelling, indeed, apart from his colleagues in an intellectual atmosphere of his own—gave but a cheerless and cold assent to the measure; and as to his Irish supporters, they bowed, it is true, but with a most resolute reluctance, and claiming to preserve all their old hostility, to what many amongst them, I doubt not, must have considered a very unworthy concession on the part of their leader. Now, what protects the system against these openly avowed feelings in future? Nothing, surely, but the want of power. I would not leave it thus at the hazard of a die; if it be as you aver, a great national good, it behoves the nation, and you as the guardians of the nation, to see that it be placed not only beyond all danger, but beyond all contingency. Nothing but a law, nothing at least so well as a law, can effect this. If it is to be conveyed a glorious gift, in full possession to the nation, it must be by solemn Act of Parliament, and not by an *ordonnance* of the King, or a bye-law rescript of an Irish Secretary. Nor is this a matter which, under pretence of complex detail, and immature inquiry requires to be prorogued. The complexity apprehended may, by the course I propose, be easily simplified; there is little need of further inquiry,—we have inquired and hesitated enough,—our duty now is, to act. In this I echo only the voice of the times, the cry which I hear in every street, and from every part of the country. Something bold, broad, and durable, must be done; and the sooner done, for the cause of the country and of education, the better. We live in a new world, and with other minds than those which have preceded us,—we must work up our institutions to their level, unless we wish to expose the whole march of our social and political existence to jerks, and jars, and disasters,—we must look forward as well as

back. It is not enough to follow precedents, we must create them. Our ancestors may be entitled to our veneration, but we owe virtue and happiness to our posterity. Steam has produced a great, and is likely to produce a still greater, change, in the combination and action of society,—space seems annihilated,—towns have melted into each other,—we live almost like one great family, in the presence of each other,—facility of communication renders us more sensible to every impulse,—public opinion has acquired more activity, extension, and energy,—combination, for any given cause, is infinitely more easy. Add to these the wholesale changes in the power of production; the new markets created; the old they have displaced; the innumerable vicissitudes which all these give rise to, not only in individual families, but in very large masses of the community;—and you will form some estimate of the mighty, and in some degree perilous, power of this moral, as well as mechanical agent upon society. Much patience and much wisdom are requisite to enable us to use its gifts, so that they may not be turned into curses, and to emerge from the old into the new state to which we are hastening, with permanent, as well as temporary, advantage. Nor, do these shocks occur at a time when we can boast of much national prosperity. Civilisation indeed seems to have attained, in many instances, its perfection, but the machine is wound up to the last turn of the wheel, the pressure of our population is everywhere felt. How this is to be alleviated, whether by raising our resources or restraining our population, may be a matter of discussion amongst economists: but, in either case, forethought, and moderation, and activity, and intelligence,—habits which education only can produce,—are confessedly indispensable. Nor is this all: there is another social change, more powerful, perhaps, in its influence than either of the preceding. The Reform Bill is now law—the country has its legislation—therefore, its destinies—in its own hands. You have consecrated the right, and must soon admit the exercise of self-government, to its lowest detail. You cannot stop at the threshold of Parliament. You must carry it down to Corporations, to Grand Juries, to Parochial meetings: every citizen must in turn be governor and governed. Such a right must be exercised well, or not be intrusted at all. Precisely in proportion as it is well or ill exercised, is the good order or confusion, the health or ill ease of the community. Will you, then, trust to chance such causes and consequences? For the discharge of such high and difficult duties will mere good intentions suffice? The very day you passed the Reform Bill, you

bound yourself by a solemn moral compact to provide for its proper working ; otherwise you conferred upon the country, not a blessing, but a curse. And how is it possible it should work well, with such instruments to work it with as an ignorant population ? You might as well trust fire-arms to the hands of a child. Yes !—Parliamentary Reform, I boldly assert, has rendered Education Reform indispensable. Every hour you delay it, you detract from that great gift. The passing generation, indeed, may not be within your power, but you are still masters of the future ; young England—young Ireland is still in your hands ; you can still determine what shall be her character and her history ; and if such be your power, what must be your responsibility ? Upon you depends who shall be the future benefactors or criminals of your country.

But, in asserting the necessity of rigorously attending to the education of the country at such a moment as the present, am I quite sure, I may be asked, that education is at any time necessary, or even ~~useful to the people~~ ? I shall not detain the House with much discussion on that futile question ; it is only amazing it has ever been listened to, or, even started in this House. Those who stand forward in its support are the best refutation of the paradox themselves. But "Folly" has been "praised" ere this, and there is no absurdity so monstrous, which may not find its fond or fantastic abettors. On what does their argument rest ? On false data, erroneous assumptions, on conclusions which they cannot believe, on theories on which they would be sorry to act. The criminal returns of France, even on the shewing of Guerry, are no evidence against a *sound* system of education ; on the shewing of Dupin they are strongly in favour of it ; so also are those of Prussia, if we are to believe Dr. Julius ; of Belgium, if we are to believe Mounier ; of Spain, if we are to believe Laborde ; and even those of England and Ireland, (and need I add Scotland), notwithstanding all the contortions to which they have been subjected, are no less proof, that crime retreats before instruction, and that if it has not retreated more rapidly than it hitherto has done, it is solely because instruction has not begun sufficiently soon, been sufficiently good, or sufficiently applicable, to the individual place or time for which it is intended. We set about educating, in general, when miseducation has already set in—we take the grown-up boy, and not the plastic infant—we have to undo, a far more difficult task, than to do—we carry on the process which ought to be purely mental, by purely mechanical means, with some knowledge of slates, desks, and prim-

mers, it is true, but with little or none of the Science of Mind, that is, without the only knowledge, which is absolutely indispensable to our purpose—we educate but half the being, give him an intellectual without a moral, or a moral education without an intellectual, or a miserable smattering of both—we make him a reading, writing, and counting machine, whom God designed for a thinking, feeling, acting fellow man—we give him precisely what he does not want, and refuse him precisely what he does ; making the artisan a Latin scholar, and the labourer a pothouse politician ; and when we have effected this, and gone on for years and years,—and for generation after generation, effecting it, we suddenly turn round, amazed, that our thorn produces sloes, and console our self-love with invectives against education, whereas, if we were not ignorant as well as vain, we ought to have directed our indignation against our own utter indolence and incapacity, and endeavoured to correct our awkwardness, instead of discarding the instrument we have so grossly misapplied.

The great point, then, is not whether we are to have education, but of what kind that education is to be. Knowledge, in itself, is neither good nor evil ; it is the application of knowledge which determines either. Now this is the very point which it is absolutely necessary we should decide. People seem to think that, because we do not educate, no education is going on ; but do they know what education is ? Everything is education ; every one, in reference to the young mind, is more or less, an educator. Sit as neutral and as idle as we please, the child is still educating, in one way or other, and at every instant before our eyes. But, then, I should like to know of what kind can such an education be ? Let us go into the alleys, fetid with the disease and vice of our luxurious capitals,—let us go into our gin-palaces,—let us go into our crowded factories, and there we shall find an immediate and appalling answer. He who does not entirely, and extensively, and properly educate, suffers miseducation to go on, when he can prevent it ; and, in suffering miseducation, so far, virtually miseducates. He is guilty of the guilt, and author of the misery which everywhere festers around him. Can the Patriot endure—dare the Christian permit this ? What more important question, then, to the conscientious man, than what really constitutes a good or bad system of National Education ? Schools are not good education, nor are books, nor boards, nor inspectors, nor grants, good education ; they are but the machinery,—the means—that by which good education may be propagated and perpetuated through the land. I care

not so much what the canal is, as what the canal carries. Tell me not what number of schools you have established, but what your schools are—what and how your schools teach. How am I to know whether it be rank poison or the bread of life, you are bestowing all this while? Until you are sure of that, you have no right to bestow it at all. The increase of your schools, if the schools be bad, is the increase only of evil; instead of being a matter of exultation, it is, and ought to be, a matter of reproach. The first thing you ought to do is to assure yourself of this goodness,—that done, it then becomes a merit, a duty to extend them as widely as you can. But of what use to extend them, unless you also provide that they shall last? The better and more numerous they are, the more important, surely, is such a consideration. These three points embrace, in my mind, all the conditions of a good system of National Education. It is here that machinery becomes useful. We look for means to attain with facility and certainty, the point which, without such means, we should attain with difficulty, or not at all.

What, then, are these means? Is National Education to be left to the Government, or to chance? Is there to be system, or no system? Which of the two principles, the Directive or Voluntary, is the best? This question may be argued for ever, by taking the extremes; but it is this very mode of arguing it, I would avoid. I would not give education altogether to the Government, much less would I leave it altogether to itself. There is a middle term between both, where neither the People nor the Government monopolize or usurp, but where both may usefully combine. And why should they not combine? Do they not do so every day? What is our Police, what are our Public Works, our Charitable Institutions, but a series of similar combinations? Is all this a solecism, an evil, a public wrong? Why not also leave these great national objects as well as education, to find their level? Why not leave them to the ordinary laws of demand and supply? But the fact is, there is no analogy between the case of the education market and other markets. Our moral wants are not regulated like our physical. The less material food we have the more we hunger for it; but the less education, the less appetite for education we feel. Neither is it quite true, even in the mechanical world, that supply should always follow demand; it very often creates, and should in many cases precede it. Canals have as often produced commerce, as commerce has produced canals. The whole of the argument has arisen from too precipitate a generalization of Adam Smith's views of bounties and prohibitions. Facts

too are against it. Were I called on to point out the precise spots where Public education in every respect is the most flourishing, assuredly I should direct you to those very countries where the Directive system is most, and the Voluntary least in vogue.

But the chief difficulty still remains—how regulate this combination? What share is the Government to have, and what the People, in contributions, powers, and duties? I answer that question by another. On what principle do they combine? They unite for mutual assistance. The Government can do some things better than the People, the People, again, many other things better than the Government. Let each do, what it can do best. The Government can impel, enlighten, and control; the People can aid and maintain. Let the duties and powers, then, of each be regulated by this simple principle: let the Government provide and extend a good system of education to all the People, (it is the Government of all,) and let all the People, in return, support and perpetuate such a system when provided by the Government.

Such a system has never yet existed in Ireland. She has never had a National Education composed of such elements. Her education has not been an education for all; it has not been under the direction of the Government; it has not been maintained by the sympathies of the People. It has been a mere machine for the maintenance of Protestantism and Oligarchy—fetters to bind the mind, as there were statutes to bind the bone and sinew of the country. Yet there were once in Ireland great and good foundations for a noble structure. I shall not insist on our early literary glories, though I might well summon a whole line of English writers to bear testimony to the early solicitude of the nation for instruction. Bede, in the seventh century, notices the number of Saxons, who came over, in crowds, to Ireland, and who, as William of Malmesbury observes, were not only most willingly received, but maintained at the public charge, supplied with books, and taught without office or reward. Spenser admits that Ireland had the use of letters long before England. "To Ireland," according to Littleton, "England chiefly owed her knowledge." Many Saxons out of England resorted thither for instruction, and brought back the use of letters to their ignorant countrymen. "Ireland," says Bayle "has given the most distinguished professors to the most famous Universities in Europe." He might have added, in many cases, it had given their founders. "It was," he continues, "as the historians of the time declare, the most civilized country in Europe; the

nursery of the sciences, &c., &c." Nor are these eulogies unsupported by fact. The monastery of Lindisfarne,—the college of Lismore,—the great College of Mayo,—“the Mayo” as it was called “of the Saxons,” dedicated to the exclusive use of English students, who at one time amounted to no fewer than 2000, but which, on its rebuilding in 1380, by the English, was prohibited from receiving Irishmen — Borrisshole, surrounded with forty literary institutions,—are all so many illustrative evidences of the early intellectual activity and literary munificence of the nation.

What, then, you may demand has become of those institutions? What? Do you ask me? Ask those who expelled the teachers, burnt the books, rufled the buildings, who wasted and withered wherever they came,—ask those who civilized Ireland, they will give you the answer. But England and Protestantism returned, we are informed, large and liberal compensations for these wrongs,—they gave us the Parochial and Diocesan schools. They! We owe both, to Catholicity and Ireland. The Right Honourable Baronet who made such assertions, some nights ago, seems not to have known, or to have forgotten, that this very system had existed from the thirteenth century, and still exists, in almost every Catholic country in Europe. The Council of Lyons, in 1245, decreed “that in all cathedral churches and others provided with adequate revenues, there should be established a school and teacher by the bishop and chapter, who should teach the clerks and other poor scholars gratis, in grammar, and that for this purpose should be assigned to him a prebend.” This injunction was equally insisted on by one of the General Councils of Lateran, and finally confirmed in its 5th Session by the Council of Trent. Such was the origin of popular education throughout Europe. We find strong traces of it in England, and still stronger in Scotland. The Parochial schools date from an ancient Act of the Scotch Parliament, a transcript of the old Canon law, and not as Dr. Chalmers supposes from the later law of William, or the gradual innovation of the Reformation. The Reformation adopted them, as it did many other Catholic institutions — they were preserved, but not created. The law of 28 Henry VIII. c. 15, itself, bears internal evidence of this origin;—telling “beades in English,” is coupled with literary instruction. By that law, Popular education was not for the first time established, but sanctioned by the new ecclesiastical authority instead of the old.

The Statute, almost a copy of the Canon, directs every Archbishop and Bishop “to give a corporal oath to every person on his admission to any dignity, be-

nefice, office, or promotion spiritual: that he shall, to his wit and cunning, endeavour himself to learn, instruct, and teach the English tongue to all and every being under his rule, &c., &c., and keep, or cause to be kept, within the place, territory, or parish, where he shall have pre-eminence, rule, benefice, or promotion, a school to learn English if any children of his parish came to him to learn the same, taking for the keeping of the said school such convenient stipend or salary as in the said land is accustomably used to be taken." Archbishops and Bishops, omitting to give the said oath are to forfeit 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, and beneficed clergymen not observing it, to forfeit 6*s.* 8*d.* for the first offence, and 20*s.* for the second, and their benefice for the third. Here, then, was quite as good a basis for a system of Parochial education, as that which existed in Scotland: in both countries it lay in the hands of the clergy. How came it that the same system produced such very different results? Oaths, fines, laws, were ineffectual in Ireland; the whole scheme failed: in Scotland it took root and flourished. The reason is clear. The system in Scotland was national; in Ireland it was not. The schools were English—the people Irish:—the schools became Protestant—the people remained Catholic. It was not Education, but Proselytism: it began by attempting to proselytise to England; it now continued to proselytise to Protestantism. The supply was there, but no one came for it; the demand diminishing, the supply soon fell off. There were no scholars, and soon no masters. Parochial schools were dispensed with in many cases—the Statute, itself, was despised as "obsolete," "impracticable," "superstitious;" but the oath was still taken, and the Tithe, though subject to such condition, retained. Neither penalty nor forfeiture was enforced:—the Bishops who were the persons to enforce it, were co-partners in the offence. The Bishops achieved, on a larger scale, in the instance of Diocesan schools, what each of their beneficed clergy achieved in that of Parochial schools, on a smaller. Burdens and duties imposed upon them both by law and religion, they contrived gradually to shift from their own shoulders to those of the laity,—as in the case of Charity and Church repairs, so also in that of Education, the obligation was forgotten, but the funds given for its performance were kept. The laity had thus to pay twice over for the same object: both payments were heavy, and the duty ill-performed after all. Had the Protestant clergy of Ireland been more tenacious of their oaths, and less of their revenues, like the Lutheran clergy of Prussia and Weimar, or the Presbyterian of Scotland, we should not now have to call upon Parliament for a 35,000*l.* grant, nor to mourn

over the immense cost and injurious results of most of the Education systems of Ireland. This, however, was not their object; the object of the Church, and therefore of the State, which was but its servile instrument, was not education, but submission. Not only did they shut up their own schools, but they would not allow of any other. From William III. down to George III. knowledge was almost as much interdicted to the Papist as liberty. Catholics not only were not permitted to endow schools, but parents were not permitted to educate their own children. It was penal to give them education abroad; it was penal to give them education at home, unless it came from the Protestant clergy. As in Scotland, so in Ireland, zeal for popular education is ascribed to the Reformation; but in the latter case the assertion is totally incorrect. Nothing was allowed but what came through the hand, and bore the license stamp of the task-master. This, it is true, was but one stain in a statute all of blood,—but it was a stain of a deep dye; it was a cruelty far beyond the ordinary barbarity of blood. It found where the soul chiefly lay, got at it, and attempted to crush it there. If the son became a Protestant, he could gavel his father's estate.—Well; the object of these Protestant schools was to make him a Protestant. Let us now see how all this worked for the social and moral improvement of the nation. Take a father, weak enough to rely on the faith of these institutions for which he paid,—sending his son to one of these schools, the old inheritance of the nation—fearful of the laws, but still more fearful of ignorance—and awaiting with impatience his return. The child of his old age—loving and beloved at parting, comes back with another creed and another heart—corrupted by the very law itself, the guardian of domestic duty and public morality—despising his father, envying his brother—grasping in thought already the bribe which the State, the Church—a Christian Church—holds up to his avidity. These things seldom occurred,—but only, because they were seldom risked. The parent, who after one example of the kind, could send his child to such a school, instituted to teach rebellion to parents, hatred to brothers, was no parent; he deserved the retribution of despised grey-hairs, and unsupported old age brought down in sorrow to the grave. Nor, if he took the alternative, and educated abroad, was the grievance less intolerable. His son outstrips, we will suppose, all competitors in some foreign University; he returns home crowned with every literary honour; how is he met on his first landing on his native shores? with the congratulations of his country? No, but with the brand and punishment of a felon. Yet with all this, Pro-

testantism did not increase, Catholicism did not diminish—the only effect the system had was to destroy or to pervert education. If it gave any, it was miseducation: to the Protestant, the education of an arrogant master; to the Catholic—of an indignant slave. This “national education,” as it was preposterously called, this “national religion,” not more national than the education, which was its handmaid, was to civilize each, and it barbarized both. Empty cathedrals and ruinous schools were its monuments; a coterie instead of a church, and a corporation assuming the name of a country, were its administrators. In the reign of Anne and of the Georges, the evil was somewhat seen; but was it remedied? Far from it; on they went in the same blindness, flinging the blame on the barbarian people, which should only have been visited on their own barbarous laws—attempting to remedy what was irremediable, and to perform what experience—which teaches even fools—had told them, was utterly impracticable. The 8th Geo. I. empowered Bishops and dignitaries to grant two acres, if a Bishop, and, if otherwise, one of glebe-land, for Protestant schools. The 5th Geo. II. c. 4, gave similar power to tenants in fee-tail or for life, to grant to Churchwardens for ever, one acre of 30s. yearly value, “for the use of a resident schoolmaster, to teach the English tongue to such children of poor Papists and all others as would resort to the same.” But did the Catholics resort to these schools, or were there others to take their place? Were the schools even built? I beg the attention of the House to the application for the Charter-schools, which followed soon after: we shall there find an answer. It declared, in very express terms, “that in the provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, the Papists far exceeded the Protestants, of all denominations, in numbers;” that there were great tracts of land entirely inhabited by Papists; that they were kept by their clergy in great ignorance of true religion; and that the creating of Protestant English schools in those places was absolutely necessary for their conversion; that the English Parish schools already established were not sufficient for the purpose, nor did the residence of the Protestant clergy fully answer that end. “That it was necessary, therefore, that some other place of education might be found,” &c. &c. But why did it not answer that end?—and, not answering, why did not the State resume the emoluments, with the functions, into its own hands? Instead of altering the system, they deigned not even to inquire into it—they attempted to remedy old blunders by adding new. The English Parish schools were declared insufficient; but the

clergy, instead of being compelled to make them so, were allowed to throw themselves for assistance on the State. The laity were to be taxed for the defalcation of the Church—the Parliament had to pay masters for duties which the Clergy had sworn to perform. This was a monstrous pretension;—monstrous as it was, it was acceded to. The Charter-school system was established—the first instance of the interference of the State. Instead, however, of taking the funds and duties at once into its own hands, it abdicated its power,—it instituted new societies, as auxiliaries to the Church, from the taxes of the People,—stayed with buttresses what it ought to have taken down—and still called the system “national.”

The Charter-school system was ultra-fanatic—it was formed for the purpose of fanaticising the country—it out-churched the church; it was determined to educate outright into Protestantism, and carry the nation by a *coup de main*. No longer waiting for the slow coming in of the refractory, it tore the child from its mother's lap, changed the name, broke the links of its existence, and, creating orphanhood in the lifetime even of the parent, made it an alien in its home, poisoned the charities in their very source, and shook society to its very centre. If, amongst the rich, this cruel charity for “the souls of the poor benighted creatures,” as a Pharisee of the day called them, created rebellious sons, amongst the poor it did worse—it deprived parents altogether of their children. Yet, for a long time this system was said to flourish; miracles were recounted of its grace and efficacy; Popery was supposed to be at its last gasp, and the great object fully effected;—yet years went on, and the Catholics were, still, millions. The Charter-schools contented themselves with the wages, and gave up the labour of the vineyards: they lost all energy, and preserved only the bigotry of their formation: unheeded and unwatched, they soon fell into abuse, then into a lethargy. In a short time there were no scholars but victims or renegades; no masters but profligates and sinecurists. To inquire was to accuse; the slightest complaint was an impeachment of Protestantism. Why should I detain the House with dwelling on their atrocities, on the cruelty of the teachers, the ignorance and immorality of the scholars; on the horrors of the schools of Sligo, Lisburne, and hundreds of others. £1,500,000 was lavished on an infamous bubble: the cost of each child was nearly 20*l.* per annum, and of each apprentice 30*l.*, yet pupils, it was complained, were not to be had, and no one would take their apprentices. In any other country but Ireland it could not be believed

that the voice of a Howard, crying aloud against such a social monster, should cry in vain. Yet he, and others like him, were not heard by the adder's ears of a corrupt Church and a venal Parliament. It was not till 1825 that the full light of day, broad and blazing, was let in on its atrocities. In that year Parliament instituted proceedings against its Administrators, and solemnly declared "the evil was so monstrous, it could not be corrected." The Parliament was a Tory, a Protestant, a church-ridden, and church-protecting Parliament; yet this education (I profane the name) still endured, and still continued to be called "national."

The Charter system failed, and new "national" societies were called in, or rose up, to supply its place. The Association for the Suppression of Vice first appeared; it adopted a new *tactique*—the *suaviter in modo* for the first time was added to the *fortiter in re*. They could not take Popery by assault; circumvallation and mining were substituted; yet all was still Protestant; Protestant books, Protestant catechisms, Protestant preachers, and Protestant patrons. This was another specimen of "nationalising" instruction for a nation of Catholics. A host of similar joint-stock companies, for the curing of Catholic souls, rather than the instruction of Catholic minds—the Baptist, Hibernian, and others succeeded, terminating, at last, in the Kildare Place Society.

It is not to be expected I should abuse the patience of the House with details of these or other similarly formed societies. Suffice it to say, the old system, though mitigated, still prevailed throughout. Always working in a corporation spirit, jobbing on the public necessities, fulfilling, very inadequately, their own promises—and ostentatious prophecies—of success, they were totally inadequate to supply the enormous deficiencies of former systems. The Church had transferred its powers and duties to these educating clubs; it was now found necessary to transfer them anew from these educators to the Government. In 1819, the Lord-Lieutenant was empowered to advance money for the building of schools under certain conditions, to voluntary subscribers. The form of proceeding was, in some particulars, objectionable. Application was to be made, by memorial, to the Lord-Lieutenant. The memorial was to be referred to Commissioners, who on obtaining answers to queries as to the quantity of land proposed to be given for the school, the number of pupils, the cost of building, made grants to perpetual trustees, (the Protestant minister and churchwarden of the parish), for the purpose. Here, again, was proselytism, with great

difficulty in fulfilling the conditions, (far too heavy and complicated,) conjoined. The results, as may be anticipated, were trifling in most instances, in some injurious.

In this state, lay Education, when the Kildare Place Society arose. Its first manifesto indicated a wonderful softening of the old Protestantising spirit. It was at length openly avowed, that proselytism was a vain attempt. The Report sets out with stating, that they had applied their efforts to the framing of "a system which, whilst it should afford the opportunities of education to every description of the lower classes of the people, might, at the same time, by keeping clear of all interference with the particular religious tenets of any, induce the whole to receive its benefits as one undivided body under one and the same system, and in the same establishment." Nothing could be fairer; it is precisely what I now propose. Had such manifesto been adhered to, the Catholics, who at first crowded their schools, would have continued to crowd them still. How much a contrary conduct was pursued, it is surely unnecessary, after so many and such prolonged discussions, to remind this House. But, were the leaven of the old sectarian spirit perfectly expelled, I still question whether the constitution of the body was not radically defective. It was a society unconnected with the Government, and collaterally, only, under its control. It was a great mistake not to have at once thrown aside all these companies, and formed, without further delay, a Board,—national, in the fullest sense of the word, linked with the executive on one side, and with the people on the other;—but private interest, or mistaken prudence, in despite of common sense and justice, prevailed. The Commissioners of 1812 (Twelfth Education Report), suggested another course. It was thought right, in order to try the experiment just noticed, to make a Parliamentary grant to an institution already in existence, rather than to appoint a new one for the purpose, as if innovation and not the adaptation of the machinery to the purposes intended, was the point in question. A grant was made on this suggestion, and no sooner made, than principles concealed in the programme, and hitherto kept in the back ground, began to develop themselves. The Bible was required to be read in their schools without note or comment. The Catholics rest the interpretation of the sacred writings on authority—the Protestants on private judgment. Here, then, was put at issue the cardinal demarcating tenet between the two great religious denominations. The usual evils of the society system now followed. Patrons interfered—private feelings, sectarian hatreds, political animosities, sprung up. Compromises were, in-

deed, attempted by the Catholic clergy, but they failed. New violations of the primary rules constantly took place. Like all other preceding societies it at last became, though under a gentler form, proselytising. The New Reformation, then in its march, added fresh virulence to the quarrel,—the people, alarmed, drew off,—the Society was comparatively left to itself,—education, as of old, became confined to a party,—the ancient evil was revived,—the public money was given to a section of the State,—and the great mass of the nation still remained without a “national education.” Yet, all this time, it must not be supposed that education had made no progress: much was done by the very obstacles which opposed it,—much by the times,—much by the Society itself. The mechanical portion of education was advanced—schools were built—books published—teachers, as it was called, “trained.” More important than all, men began to think of education—abuses were hinted at,—inquiry, calmly but surely, went on.

The results of these inquiries were brought to the surface by the Commission on Irish Education. It conferred an invaluable benefit on the country—it cleared away the rubbish of the old structures, and shewed how a new structure might be raised. The Committee of 1824, still more precise, determined a plan,—the Catholic hierarchy almost unanimously seconded it; their joint recommendations were repeated in the Report of the Committee of this House in 1830, of which my Right Honourable Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was Chairman. Yet all these inquiries, all these recommendations, all these solicitations, were neutralized, eluded, or opposed by the mole-eyed, anti-national policy of the then Government. The old machinery, rickety as it was, was continued; it was urged that this Protestant education *ought* to be accepted by a Catholic population; as if in any question of this delicate and difficult nature, it is sufficient to say “ought.” You may offer to sell, but you cannot force to buy. Your system must be acceptable, to induce people to accept. The failure of the Kildare Place Society proceeded from a total ignorance of the state of Ireland, and of the laws of mind. It really refused, whilst it affected to give; it deferred education to a period which was likely never to occur,—till the nation should become Protestant. Such a system was not national,—the mass of the nation was virtually excluded—for such a system the nation had no right to pay. But it was not sufficient to destroy; we had a more difficult task imposed on us—to build up. The failure of the Kildare Place Society, however, not only decided what should be done, but also

taught us by what means, and in what manner, we should do it. It shewed us the necessity of taking things as they really were, and of framing our plan, not with reference to some visionary contingent state of the country, but to the living actual man. It convinced us that we must at once get rid of joint-purse converting societies, private patronage, and oligarchical pretensions, and reinstate the nation in its original rights: to make education popular, it was essential it should be an education really and *bona fide* for the people. Hitherto we had had no national education; but there was no good reason why we should not have one. I, for one, could never see any circumstance which could forbid the experiment.

I had scarcely been honoured with a seat in this House when I made efforts to put this conviction into deed; not only to act up to the recommendations of 1824 and 1830, but to go far beyond them. I drew up a series of Queries in February 1831, relative to a most extensive plan of education,—an education in every sense “national,” and addressed them to the Catholic Prelates, and to several of the most distinguished members of the Protestant and Presbyterian communions. The answers received were, with few exceptions, perfectly consonant to my views. I brought in the Bill to which I have already referred, embodying a portion of those views, in September; and as I have stated, Mr. Stanley,—originally opposed to the arrangement,—adopted them in the October following; and with a spirit which caused the difficulties he had to contend with even in his own department, does him high honour, established at once the present Board. The experiment has been, as I have already observed, satisfactory; but the defects existing at its formation exist still; above all, it still retains its temporary character, it is still no more than an experiment. The object of my Bill is to remove the defects, to extend the powers, and finally to render the operations sure, and the duration permanent. But I go far beyond this,—I begin with Elementary,—but I extend my views to a reform of every other class of, education—from Elementary to Superior. This may appear an ambitious attempt far beyond the powers of any single individual, much less of so humble a one as myself. Perhaps so; but there is no harm in tracing, at the very outset, a broad and consistent plan. Harmony in any system, especially in a system of National Education, is a matter of great importance, and when once a just principle is established, the working it out into its details is comparatively a matter of little difficulty. Neither does it impose on us the task of working out the

whole at once. We may take what portions, and at what times we please. It merely protects us from a kind of legislation to which, unfortunately, we are too subject.—legislation by scraps, for the immediate purpose, without reference to the ultimate whole.

I propose, then, in the first instance,—recognising as I do the directive principle,—to establish a Board of National Education in Dublin. The construction of this Board should be as impartial as it is possible. It should be composed, therefore, of various persuasions, professions, and interests. The Protestant and Catholic Archbishops, and a Clergyman of the Presbyterian body, should constitute the clerical—the Secretary for Ireland, and five other Members, one from each of the four provinces of Ireland, and one from Dublin, the lay portion of the body. This has nearly been effected in the organization of the existing Board. It requires only the addition of a Member from Ulster to complete the lay Members. If it be right that the minister should have a council, it is not less right that the council should have a responsible minister for its head. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, for the time being, ought to be its President, and thus *ex officio* the Minister of Public Instruction for Ireland. I give the appointment of the members to the Lord-Lieutenant. I have considered maturely this question; and there is less difficulty in vesting it in his hands than leaving it to election of the people, or to election of the Board itself. Ireland, divided as it is, would send in partisans to a body, which, of all other bodies in Ireland, would require calmness and impartiality. Vested in the Board itself, it would ultimately convert the Board into a close corporation. I see no just ground for apprehension of an increase of Government patronage. This is not the day of prerogative. In a free country the Government is really the servant of the country. If the representative body be truly such, and you place under its control all the great departments of the State, you may increase their power as you choose, you only increase the efficiency of the organs and instruments of the People. I fear not, therefore, to give this body all powers necessary for the ends for which it is instituted,—requiring from them, however, in return, duties conducive to these ends, and subjecting them to the strictest inspection and control of Parliament. The end of these institutions is, to improve, extend, and permanently secure education. One of these objects, without the other two, will not be sufficient. Extend instruction, as I have already said, without improving it, and you extend an evil; if good, and not extended, its benefits are

trifling ; if extended, and liable to change or interruption, you cheat the public with a mere illusion. To effect these purposes the Board should be empowered to purchase land, to build school-houses, of every description, from the Infant-School to the highest Primary, houses for teachers, and all buildings necessary thereto ; to annex land for playground, gardens for teachers, and for purposes of agricultural instruction, to outfit with all articles necessary for teaching, books, libraries, collections, &c., &c. All these expenses should fall exclusively on the Board.

By the present system, no school can be founded or aid granted by the Board, unless on the specific condition of the Parish furnishing, for the first outlay, one-third, at least, of the expense. I am aware, that in Prussia, this principle is carried further ; the Parish furnishes the entire ; a duty performed, on the contrary, by the Church in Weimar ; but neither of these precedents ought to weigh against the experience of positive inconvenience. Many parishes are too poor to furnish a large present outlay in money ; and what happens ? They either remain without a school, or the money is advanced by some rich individual, who repays himself back in patronage (and patronage of the most injurious kind too), what he had momentarily lent to the parish. I wish to rescue the people from wearing the livery of any man ; and to convince them, that whatever they have, it is thoroughly, and for ever their own. The objections against such arrangement, on the ground of the expense entailed on the State, are futile. The expense which the State has to bear, ceases with the purchase of the land, and the building, and outfit of the school ; it must, therefore, diminish every year ; and, finally, very nearly terminate, altogether. A large proportion of schools are already established ; school buildings may be purchased in some districts at a slight expense ; nor is this all—the Board providing the land obviates all chances of litigation, so incidental to the actual trustee system ; it prevents the selection of bad sites, so common at present ; building the school ensures a cheap and a good model, and fitting it out, gives a guarantee that the parish will always begin with a proper type of what a school ought to be, before their eyes. It must also be remembered, that the Board is exempted from the payment of teachers—another great reduction, not only of expense, but of business ; it is necessary, on the present system, very frequently to keep an open account with the teachers of schools under the jurisdiction of the Board. These provisions enable the Board to extend education as widely as they may desire, and give ample assurance for its per-

manence when so extended. But a far more important consideration still remains, the giving a high and useful character to education. This object embraces two considerations—the providing a good Code of education, judicious general Regulations for the management and teaching of their schools, and proper instruments by which these Regulations may be put in practice. I propose, therefore requiring that the Board should draw up such Regulations, within a specific period, with the approbation of the Lord-Lieutenant, to be laid before Parliament, and published generally throughout the country; I give them power, also, under certain restrictions, of modifying and altering these Regulations as may be found requisite. It would be out of the range of an Act of Parliament to embrace one-twentieth part of such regulations, nor does such appear to me to be its legitimate province. The French code of 1834 has gone too far, perhaps, in that particular; but the French code, full and detailed as it is, has already required a great number of supplementary *ordonnances* and Circulars from the government. As to the Prussian, it has more the character of such a regulation than of a law, and besides, it must be remembered, that it emanated from a single Minister, and not from a deliberative representative body, like this House. I conceive, therefore, that in constituting this, like every other department, it is sufficient to give ample powers, and subject their exercise to the control of Parliament.

Hence, in this Bill, as well as in the former, I omit all regulations in respect to religion. In the former instance, I was in consequence accused, by no very judicious or impartial inquirers into the matter, with a total indifference to the subject. Had they taken pains to read even the preamble of the Bill, they would have found that, in that very part which is supposed most sacredly and strongly to embody its spirit, I had solemnly consecrated the principle, that all education should repose on religion—instruction without it may lead to knowledge, but cannot lead to virtue. The Tree of Good and Evil should not be separated from the Tree of Life. This, I repeated, was my conviction, but I was, also, not less sensible, that in a country like ours, circumstances and localities must guide in the application of this principle. Prussia has, with punctilious attention, considered the religious feelings of even the smallest sect amongst her subjects; so also has France. There are Protestant schools, and Catholic schools, and Mixed schools; schools, in fine, for every class of feeling, as well as of individuals.

All this is a matter of specific regulation, determined by Circulars of the Council of Instruction, and not by the body of the law. The instruments for communicating education are Teachers and Books. These are the especial province, the highest province, of an enlightened body like the Board. They are the all in all of Education. To think of diffusing instruction without instructors, is beginning, like the philosophers of Laputa, from the roof. You build schools, but you do not give education. Hence it is that the Irish in so many instances are informed, but not educated. The usual mode of selecting at present is by Examination. But Scotland is a proof how little that can be relied on. Cramming, a glib tongue, and bold nerves may introduce, as it has done, blockheads into the seat of modest and timid learning. As to Certificates, they are as proverbial for falsehood as any other species of puffing. You require, then, besides Examination, a previous course, well digested, well pursued. A dunce cannot play the clever man for four years, though he may for four hours, without discovery. Teachers' schools, *Education* schools, not *Training* schools, (for that sounds technical and mechanical, the manual exercise of instruction) should, before all things, and above all things, be established, directed, and maintained by the Board. It is apprehended that this will produce too great a uniformity, and degenerate at last into a monopoly. That would be a serious evil. I have as earnest a desire as any man to preserve entire the perfect freedom of education. Its action should in no wise be hampered either by bounty or prohibition. A Leviathan, all-absorbing education company would only be a manufacturer of slaves and fools. I guard, therefore, against such a *perniciēs barathrumque* as much as I can. Cases may arise where Teachers' schools may be usefully conducted by individuals, or in courses for the same purpose annexed to Universities. Either would undoubtedly promote the great general purposes of education—each should be liberally and cordially encouraged. One of these cases has come within my own personal knowledge. A gentleman, distinguished not merely for his high literary and scientific attainments, but still more for his long experience and true views on education, (Dr. Bryce, of Belfast,) had long desired to establish in the institution on which he confers such honour, by being its head, a regular course, based on what alone it should repose, the Science of Mind. Deeply impressed with its paramount importance, I applied to the Government, so early as 1831, for a grant of 2000*l.* for the purpose, repayable by tickets, to such teachers as Government might think proper to select for the course.

The course was most ample, in point of time and studies, and would soon have raised up a body of teachers in the country superior to those who owe so much to Professor Pillans and Mr. Wood, in Scotland. His colleagues offered, in the noblest manner, their assistance. There was no doubt of success if the experiment had been tried. Government, after solicitations, must say, the most zealous, seconded by names the very highest of which the cause of education can boast, refused, on the ground that the Board had not the powers for the purpose. I propose to give them such powers of aid whenever such a case as the one instanced shall present itself. I go further—I admit to the Examinations for place of teacher such as have been educated at any such school, or have attended any such courses; and I enjoin the publication of their names in a List of approved candidates once a year, that the country at large may be acquainted with their merits, and know whom, and how to select. But students for such profession cannot be expected unless you first raise the profession itself. I would place it therefore, by every means in my power, on a par with the other learned professions; I would make it a fourth learned profession, if possible. But this cannot be done, unless you first make it respectable. I, therefore, give the Board power to promote; to reward with honorary and other distinctions; to ensure, with the approbation of the Lord-Lieutenant, retiring pensions; and, in certain cases, to extend them to their families. The school-salary conferred by the parish guarantees their independence; the school-fees paid by the children stimulate their exertions. I leave the appointment of Teachers, where it ought to be, in the hands of the Board. The People may be judges of moral character, they are no judges of competency. All opinion of that kind must be taken second-hand, and then you open a wide field to intrigue, despotism, and servility. Books also should be provided for the People, though not forced on them. Prizes should be given by the Board for their production, and not only for them, but for every species of information which can tend to advance education. The great, the paramount, utility of such a body, is to receive the scattered rays of knowledge, whether from this or other nations, and to reflect them back concentrated on the country. Such works are not below the highest intellect in the land. A more noble spectacle cannot be conceived than to see the great lights of the age bending down to shew the way to these "little ones," and difficult is the task as it is high. It may well put to proof the prowess of the boldest amongst us. In that particular we

are in arrear, though recent efforts shew we are becoming sensible of it. Look to Germany—look to France; their School-libraries abound with a profusion of excellent works: look even to America; why are they unknown to us—why are they not ours also—why have we not as good, or better? The Board should establish in each Parochial school—a Parochial Library. It can be done, (I speak from experience,) for the sum of 15*l.* to 20*l.* I would not only extend, thus, the education of the child beyond the threshold of the school, but I would make it an instrument for the education of the parent, and a stimulant to watch over the education of the child. The Library should be open to all families whose children were in daily attendance at the school. To enforce the whole of these regulations, the Board should appoint School inspectors—a Catholic and a Protestant in each province—and should see that they reported twice a-year. In like manner the Board should report to Parliament. Such are the powers and duties I propose for the Board.

I now turn to the People. The province of the People is, to aid and maintain. When the Board wishes to found a School in any particular Parish, I propose that they should transmit to the Parish, through the Clergyman, Magistrates, &c., a Proposal to build and outfit such school, &c. &c., provided the Parish, on its part, should consent to assess itself for the payment of the Teacher, the repairs of the buildings, and the daily and incidental charges of the school. The Parish, on meeting (I specify minutely the qualifications of the voters, mode of meeting, &c.) assent to, or dissent from, the Proposal of the Board. If assented to, the assessment or School rate is to be levied on such Parish by the Grand Jury Collector on the opening of the school; notice is transmitted thereof to the Board, and the Board complete the work. The Parish elect at the same meeting which votes the assessment, a School Committee, of which the Protestant, Catholic, and Presbyterian Clergymen, the senior Magistrate and Physician of the Parish, are permanent members—the others, equal at least in number, are elected from the rate-payers, and removable once a-year. Should the Parish wish to establish a school, they are to address a Memorial, either through the Clergyman or the Magistrate, to the Board, which, thereupon, is required to send down a Proposal, on which the Parish proceeds as just stated. These powers given to the Parishes are intended to produce a general and permanent interest in the school. I do not mean, however, to deprive the Board of the power of granting aid, under certain restrictions, for the establishing or maintenance of schools. I provide for such cases in every possible way

I can. I require, however, that whenever aid be granted, due security should be given for the payment of the Teacher and maintenance of the school. Schools also already established, may, under certain conditions, put themselves under the superintendence of the Board. Such is a loose outline of the plan I propose for Elementary Education.

But education must not stop here. Our Middle classes are, if possible, more in need of education, comparatively, than our Lower — in some cases they have, in consequence, scarcely the character of a Middle class at all. I would provide them, also, with their share of moral and intellectual food. The Board should be empowered, in the same manner as they provided land, built and fitted out Parochial schools for the Parishes, to provide land, build and fit out County Academies for the Counties; provided the Counties, like the Parishes, consented to assess themselves, through their Grand Juries, for the payment of their Teachers, and the annual support of these institutions. And pursuing still further this second grade of education, the Board should have like power to found and fit out Provincial Colleges, provided, (as is now done, for our District Asylums) the counties composing these Provinces would, as in the case of the Academies, assess for their support. You would thus, by degrees, have thirty-two Academies and four Provincial Colleges in Ireland. Nor let Honourable Members be startled at the expense. We have commencements, at least, for the Academies in the Diocesan and Royal schools, and, for the Provincial Colleges, in the Institutions of Cork and Belfast. Special education, which may be placed also in this grade, is a matter more of interest to the particular profession, and to the individuals who require it, than to the Government and the People at large. I do not propose to adopt quite the same rule in its regard that I have in the other; yet conditions of a similar nature might be made with the Profession, which here would stand in lieu of the Parish and the County — the Board making the outlay, the Profession paying for the support. This, in the case of the Civil Engineer Department, would be especially desirable, if we are to judge from the examinations lately held before the Board of Public Works. The education of men, who are in some measure public officers, in a peculiar degree, concerns the public, and ought to be, in part at least, an object of public outlay, (as I am informed it is in Holland), through the Board.

The third grade, Superior or University education, requires more care. As our Universities are now constituted, they cannot, without exciting great hostility

and resistance, be placed under the jurisdiction of any public Board; but as it is important they should be in relation with it, I see no reason why, of their own body, they might not constitute a Council to communicate, or give such powers to the University Board which now exists, limited, if they think proper, to such purposes. Another more material point is, the nationalising the University, and putting it in harmony with other portions of the national system. This can only be done by enlarging the present University, or by founding a new one. The Fellowships, for the most part, being ecclesiastical, cannot be thrown open to all persuasions, but an additional number of Lay Fellowships may be founded, to which, as to the Professorships, Catholics and Dissenters, as well as Protestants, might be eligible, and the Scholarships, to which no such objections exist, be at once thrown open to all communions alike. If this should not be practicable, why not, without further delay, found a second University? When ours was first established, the nation did not exceed a million; we are now eight. Germany, with 30,000,000 inhabitants, has twenty; the Netherlands have six, Scotland five, Ireland one. Cromwell thought of erecting a second one at Athlone. Is it less necessary now?

The last grade of education, to which I shall advert, is Supplementary and Subsidiary education. By the first, I mean that description of education which supplies the want of early culture, such as Adult Schools, Mechanics' Institutes, &c.; by the second, I understand all that contributes to continue or improve education already acquired, such as Literary and Scientific Institutions, learned and other Societies, Museums, Galleries, Botanic Gardens, &c. I would deal with these precisely in the same way as with Elementary and Academical education. The Board should make the first outlay, provided the town or city consented to assess itself in a certain stipulated sum for their support. This expense to the State would, like that of Parochial and other schools, be necessarily limited, and constantly diminishing, but it would effectually extend such establishments to every town in the land.

I have, as I stated at the outset, pursued the one simple principle throughout, modifying it only as circumstances required. It is not to be supposed that I hope to achieve even a small portion of this plan for some time, but I thought it incumbent on me to place the whole at once frankly before the House, that we might work one part in harmony with the other, and not do to-day what, Penelope like, we might be compelled to undo to-morrow. I should wish to divide it if possible

into four Bills—a Bill for the Establishment of a Board of National Education, and three successive Bills for Elementary,—for Academical and Collegiate—and, finally, for Supplementary and Subsidiary education. Change in the University was subject more for an Address to the Crown. Circumstances, however, compel me to combine the first Bill with the second. It is to introduce this I now ask leave of the House. Any measure for Academical education will require some previous inquiry, and I have a notice to that effect, (I allude to the one on Diocesan Schools), on the Order Book of the House.

I have now done, thanking the House for the indulgence with which it has listened to what, from the nature of the subject, I feel must have been comparatively tedious, at least to the majority. I could scarcely have done less, and earnestly wish I could have done more. The more I have thought and think on it, the more deeply am I penetrated with the importance of this all-embracing question. Every day adds to the conviction that we have fully reached the point when a thorough and extensive Education Reform can no longer be deferred. If our political Reform was searching, so also should be this; our Schools are not a jot less important than our Parliaments. If we disfranchised, and enfranchised, in the one case, without any weak visitings of compunction for this man's prejudice or the other man's plunder, but with a steady eye to "right" only and the "public good," struck boldly onward for posterity and the country, so also in this other, for an object in no degree inferior, should we advance with the same unflinching regard to justice and the commonweal. Other countries are teaching us the lesson—we touch the mind and civilization of other nations on every side. Yes! Education Reform will come and conquer like every other. What is the folly of to-day, will be the wisdom of to-morrow. Men who now shrink from the struggle will wish to share the laurels, as in other Reforms, when the battle is over and the victory is won. The very opposition to its progress shews no confidence: there is no heart (if I may so express it) in their blows. The public mind of this country is at last awakening to the importance of the question; and in England it is sufficient to see, in order to will and do. Nor have I more reason to despair of Ireland. Is there not some hope that the miserable phantasmagoria of Government with which she has, up to this hour, been deluded and insulted—will, at last, end? Up to this hour, with few exceptions, Secretary on Secretary has passed over that wasted land, merely gleaning what his predecessor had left undevoured. What interest could men feel about a country which they only

governed, I might say by parenthesis, and merely, as it would seem, for the purpose of shewing with what small expenditure of trouble or knowledge Administrations might be kept in motion,—and what an easy feat it was to ruin a country, and to enrich an individual at the same time. A contemptible *bureaucracy*, an aide-de-camp coterie, has been our government. No new governor could come in, but he was obliged to do more than Chinese obeisance to both, to pay more attention to the balancing of parties, than to the government of the country,—playing the chess-game of this man's fears against that man's hopes,—managing his seat, whilst he should be boldly riding on. The result was natural—no man ever governed through such instruments, but was ultimately obliged to govern for them. Master in name, slave in reality,—he had large powers for mischief, none for doing good.

If I could think that such were to continue to be our government, I should despair, not of this Bill only, but of any measure which did not serve the personal pettifogging purpose of the day. An enlightened Minister must govern, as well as rule. Such an Administration would be incapable of either. It would be at the mercy of every man who had cunning enough to blind, or courage enough to trample on it. To expect from such any broad or permanent improvement, would be to take placemen for patriots, and to confound prudence with imbecility. That such will not in future be our government, I am willing to believe; that such, in any case, can never long continue to be our government, I am quite surè. The people are beginning to comprehend their true interests, and have abundantly proved that they no longer are dependant upon any party. In any case I am resolved to do my duty; I have a strong faith in a righteous and great cause, and I cannot believe that what ought to succeed, will be long unsuccessful. In one word, it comes to this—men will be educated, whether you like it or not. The only point is, how,—or for what? That you can determine, but that only; and the sooner, and the more thoroughly you determine it,—I say it not in menace, I say it not in dread, but with that awful conviction of responsibility which every man must feel who looks with attention to the present, and still more to the future aspects of society,—the sooner and more thoroughly you determine it, the better for every man, from the highest to the lowest in the land. I now ask for leave to bring in a Bill for the Establishment of a Board of National Education, and the advancement of Elementary Education in Ireland.

NOTES.

P. 11. *Catholic Provisions for the Education of the People.*—The Council of Lateran, referred to in the text, ordained that means should be provided in *every* parish for the support of a teacher, whose duty should be to instruct "the Clerks and all Poor gratis." At a subsequent General Council, provision was in like manner made for a "Lecturer in divinity," whenever the church should happen to be a cathedral, and in other cases, a "schoolmaster" was directed to be provided, empowered to collect from the Clergy of the Parish. For the Council of Lyons, see Tiraboschi, t. iv. par. 1, p. 69. See also a Brief much commended by the Abbate Gaet. Marini, still more distinctly recognising these ordinances. "Venerabili Fratri . . . Episcopo Castellani:—Ne propter inopiam, Scholaribus et Clericis, subtraheretur utilitas disciplinæ, dudum in Generali Concilio piâ fuit provisione, statutum, ut non solum in quâlibet Cathedrali Ecclesiâ, sed etiam in aliis, quarum sufficere poterunt facultates, constitueretur Magister idoneus, a Prelato, cum Capitulo, seu majori et saniore parte Capituli eligendus qui clericos ipsius ecclesiæ, aliosque scolares pauperes gratis in grammaticâ facultate, instruere juxta posset, percepturus in hujusmodi ecclesiâ unius Prebendæ proventus quamdiu persistit in docendo; Nos igitur, &c. &c. The Canon of the Council of Trent, is still larger. It decrees (*Sessio v. c. 1. De Institut. Sac. Scrip. et Liberal. Artium*,) not only that the former Canons should be observed, but where a sufficient maintenance for Teachers in Cathedrals could not be procured by the gift of a Prebend, the Bishop should be empowered to *lay his clergy for the purpose under contribution*. Even in the poorer parishes, a schoolmaster was ordered to be provided "*lest that necessary work of piety should be neglected*." The same conviction of the importance of education is strongly apparent in the preamble to the Statute of Hen. VIII. "Nothing doth more conferre," it sets out, "to the instruction of rude and barbarous people, than a good instruction in God's holy laws, &c. &c. It is further earnestly urged, as one of the best means of civilizing Ireland, in that curious Paper, the "State of Ireland, and Plan for its Reformation," (1515,) lately published by the Commissioners; "also, that every land-lord, greate or small, of every Iryshe Countey, subget to the King, put his sonne, and heyre to Dublyn or to Drogheda, or to some other Englyshe towne, to lerne to wryte and rede, and to speke Englyshe, to lerne also the draught and maners of Englyshe men." Vol. 2, p. 30, &c., 1834.

So early as 1494, the principle of taxation for school purposes and of compulsory attendance was recognised by the Legislature in Scotland. 201. Scotch was ordered by Statute as the penalty for non-compliance. In 1615, an Act of the Privy Council, confirmed by an Act of the Scotch Parliament in 1633, gave it additional force. It was in the year 1696, however, that the organization of public instruction assumed its present substantial

and extended character. By the Act of the Scotch Parliament passed in that year, (*Will. and Mary, Sess. 6. c. 26*), the several rights and duties of the Government and the People in providing for the education of the public, were exactly determined. This law has worked well. In the year 1835, why should England and Ireland be still without one?

P. 11. *Parochial Schools.* Statutes have been passed, not abrogating, but confirming the Statute of Henry VIII. The 7th William III., in language still more precise than that Act, requires that every clergyman on induction to his living, shall take the following oath:—"I do solemnly swear that I will teach or cause to be taught an English school within the vicarage or rectory of —, as the law in that case requires." By the same Statute, to the intent that no pretence might be made or used, that there were not sufficient number of schools in this realm to instruct and inform the youth thereof, in the English language and other literature, it was enacted "*That the Act of Henry VIII., whereby it was provided that every incumbent should keep or cause to be kept an English schoole, should thenceforth be strictly observed and put in execution.*" These are the ordinances of the Church and State. How were they observed? The Report of 1790 after recognising the obligation to its full extent—states,—"*That is nearly one half of the united benefices, and single benefices not united, in this kingdom a general usage has prevailed, by which the said stipend has been limited (some very few instances excepted), to 40s. yearly . . . that the allowance of 40s. yearly is a recompense totally inadequate for the performance of that duty—and yet this small allowance is not paid in one half of the united benefices and single benefices not united in this kingdom.*" The Report goes on "*In the 29 dioceses from which the said Returns have been made, the number of parishes is 1699, comprising 838 benefices.*"

"It appears that 352 only of the said 838 benefices have Parish schools which are kept in no instance by the incumbents or their curates, but by deputies or persons paid for that purpose, which stipend does not exceed (some very few instances excepted), 40s. yearly."

"In 74 of the said 838 benefices, the clergyman pays 40s. yearly as an allowance for a schoolmaster, without causing any schools to be kept."

"And in the remainder of the said 838 benefices, being 412 in number, we cannot discern by the said returns that the clergymen kept any schools, or that they pay any salaries to others for keeping them." Where were there oaths?

"This fact it is humbly submitted, is much to be lamented, since we find that above 11,000 children receive instruction in reading, and, for the most part, also in writing and arithmetic, in the schools of this class; though, as we apprehend, they are not kept in very considerably more than half the benefices of the kingdom."

"It appears by the said returns of the 29 dioceses, that there are 201 school-houses in which the said schools are kept, and about 44 acres of ground chiefly in small parcels belonging to some of the said school-houses."

"The prices paid for instructing the children are generally from one to three shillings per quarter."—App. p. 138.

Such was the state of those Parochial schools in 1788 and 1790. But perhaps they have improved since. Let us see:—

1788*	Number of benefices inspected	838
	Schools kept	361
	No schools whatever kept	403
1810†	Number of benefices inspected	1125
	Schools kept	549
	No schools kept	187
	No return	389
1823‡	Benefices returned	910
	Schools kept	321
	No schools kept	135
	No return	454

These eloquent figures need no comment. But, doubtless, there were good Church-and-State reasons for all this. It is worth while inquiring what these reasons were,—what were the apologies put forward for this immorality, by these *ex professo* moral men?

One calls the statute “*oppressive*.”—The oppressive obligation of teaching the people, by the salaried instructors of the people! The statutes legalizing tithes are not deemed oppressive.—Oh, no!

Another calls it “*impracticable*.”—Yet in *some* parishes it has been *reduced to practice*. Look at the Report. Why not then in *all*? Besides, if impracticable, why take the oath? Why swear to do what is *impracticable*? Why swear at all?

A third calls it “*obsolete*.”—Obsolete means “fallen into disuse.” Who allowed it to fall into “disuse?” The very men who were sworn to preserve it! The people had nothing to say to the neglect. We do not hear of tithes becoming *obsolete*,—we hear only of the *indefeasible* rights of the Church. Are the people only to have no such rights? Are they always to be barred?

A fourth calls it “*superstitious*.”—The superstition of providing schools at the people’s expense, for the people! The detestable Popish superstition of instructing the ignorant, reforming the vicious, giving strength to the weak, and light to the blind. Why were all these “superstitions” so religiously thrown away, and the equally Popish “superstition” of tithes so religiously preserved?

Such is the plea of the Church; the State affects to be more conscientious. In 1811, the then Secretary of State, Mr. Wellesley Pole, in a fit of virtuous indignation, declared, that in this particular, as well as in that of the Diocesan schools, he should look to the oath of the Protestant clergy. Did he? What was the result? It is enough to say, he was an Irish Secretary. The Church smiled, and things remained as they were.

P. 12. *Diocesan schools*.—The Statute 12 Eliz., c. 1, adopting the canon of the Catholic Church, and applying it in the principle set forth in the Statute of Henry, enacts “That there shall be henceforth a *free schoole* within every diocese of this realm of Ireland, the master to be English, the Lord Deputy to have the nomination, except in four dioceses, Armagh, Dublin, Meath, and Kildare:—the schoole to be placed in the principal shire-town at the costes and charges of the whole diocese, without respect of freedoms, by the oversight of the Ordinaries, of the Vicars General, *sede vacante*, and the Sheriff of the shire. The Lord Deputy or other governor of this realm for the time being, with the advice of the Council, according to the quantity and quality of every diocese,

* Report.—(11 Rep. Com. Educ.)

† Parl. Pap.—Schools. Sess. 1823.

‡ 14 Rep. Com. Educ.

to appoint for every schoolmaster such yearly salary, where none is already appointed, as he, with and by their advice, shall think expedient, whereof the *Ordinaries shall bear for ever the third part, and the Parsons and other ecclesiastical persons of the same diocese, the other parts by an equal contribution,*" &c. &c.

How has this Statute been obeyed?

By the 12th Geo. II. c. 6, s. 9, Grand Juries were *empowered*, from time to time to present *proportionably* for the building and repairs of those schools. This was found *inconvenient*. They were, therefore, subsequently empowered to assess for the *whole* of such charge, the Bishop and Clergy still, however, religiously engaging to pay the teacher.

"From this institution," says the Report of 1790, "the public receive *very inadequate* benefit. In many dioceses there are *neither* Diocesan schools, nor school-houses; in many, the houses are *ruinous*, and the mastership of the schools mere *sinecures*." From the Table annexed to the Report, it would appear that there were only 18 schools in existence at the time, and not more than 5 serviceable; the Clergy, alleging the law, refused to repair them—the Grand jury, alleging the neglect of the Clergy, refused to fulfil the law. The schools were *free-schools*. The law was imperative but inoperative—so say our later Commissioners. Out of the total (324) educated in that year, not more than 25 were free. Boarders, at 24 guineas per annum, and day-scholars at 4 filled their place. For the whole of this national education for the Middling classes, the Clergy paid 61*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* What did Irish benefices average in that year? Many it is to be presumed were worth twice 600*l.* Subsequent years made little improvement, as will easily be seen by comparing the following official details:—

Year,	Diocese.	Dioc. Schools.		Sal.		Boarders.	Scholars.		
				£	s. d.		Day.	Free.	Total.
1788	34	18		616	5 7	46	253	25	324*
1809	34	13		..	..	..	..	..	380†
1821	34	15		450	0 0	..	..	..	.. ‡
1823	34	16		500	0 0	..	..	19	..
1831	34	12		..	..	..	..	74	419

Was the law repealed, or a dispensation granted?—How are we to account for these defalcations? What is the meaning attached to it by the Church and the Government? The Fourteenth Report of the Commissioners of Education is signed by the Primate and other dignitaries of the Church, and by persons connected with the Government. What does it state? "That it would be highly expedient that the contributions of the clergy should be paid with *greater regularity* and to a *greater extent* than usual. It might not be unreasonable that they should be rated at a sum not exceeding 2½ per cent. of their respective incomes." If this were enforced throughout Ireland, should we require to call on Parliament for 35,000*l.* a-year? Why, then, is it not enforced? The Archbishop of Armagh himself recommends it. And we still hear of the sacrilege of "appropriation!" What is it but "restitution?"

Precisely similar were the abuses of the *Royal Schools*. They

* Report of Commissioners, App.

† Fourth Report of Commission of Education.

‡ Sessional Paper, 563.

|| Rep. of Dioc. Schools, 106.

were founded in the first year of the reign of Charles II., and endowed with a property of 13,672 acres, which in 1831 produced 5800*l.* per annum, for which were educated sixty free day-scholars and ten free boarders ! These, too, were National Institutions.

P. 13. *Laws of William to discourage Catholic Education*, 7 Will. c. 4. Act restraining Foreign Education. 9 Will. c. 1. Act banishing Popish Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests. Every Popish school-master, tutor, or usher, was subjected to the same penalties as the Popish clergy, and 10*l.* offered for his conviction.

P. 15. *Charter Schools*.—In 1741, ten years after the Charter, the Society had established eighteen schools, educating 372 children, after having disbursed about 10,000*l.*

In 1751, ten years afterwards, they had established thirty-five schools, at which they educated 1022 children, having disbursed 54,000*l.*

In 1761 (next ten years) they had established forty-seven schools, at which they educated 1979 children, expending 100,000*l.*

In 1787 there were about forty schools, 1800 scholars, annual expenditure 12,000*l.*

From 1787 to 1799—grant 150,000*l.*—schools forty—annual expenditure 20,000*l.*

From 1800 to 1825—grant 27,000*l.*—schools thirty-five—1870 scholars—annual expenditure 35,389*l.*

This gives for the annual average cost of each school 1000*l.*, and for the cost of each child 18*l.* 18*s.* What an education could be had in Germany, in half the time, for half the price !

P. 19. *The Association for the Suppression of Vice*, in 1824, educated 15,922; and the *Kildare Place Society*, so early as 1825, boasted of their 1490 schools, and 100,000 scholars. Since 1831 the existing *Board* has received from Parliament 96,388*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.*, for which they have aided 1106 schools in actual operation, and agreed to grant aid towards the establishing of 191. There are in attendance in 723 of these schools, from which returns have been received, 110,372 scholars; and taking the average at 152 at each school, the whole number of scholars at all the schools, may be calculated at 168,588; to which, if the schools now in preparation average the same, we may add 29,032 more, making a total of 197,620 scholars; some contrast, certainly, to the 1870 of the Charter School National Education.

L O N D O N :
Printed for the Proprietor of the "MIRROR OF PARLIAMENT,"
8, Abingdon Street, Westminster.

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